

OBREGON JUST MISSED BEING MEXICO'S SECOND STRONG MAN

By JOHN F. BARRY.

A man of somewhat swarthy complexion meekly followed in the train of the head waiter of a Broadway hotel. He was clothed in the conventional garb of the American business man, and not one man in a hundred would pay him the tribute of a second glance were it not perhaps for an empty right sleeve. The remarkable Pancho Villa was responsible for the empty sleeve. The man was Gen. Alvaro Obregon, the real "primer jefe" of Mexico not so long ago.

But at a nearby table and, fascinated, watched his every movement. I noted the quick smile, the changing eyes, now cold and stern as he gave the waiter his order, truculent almost, then brimming with laughter as he listened to the quick spoken, vehement conversation of his friend.

And as I watched him memories came crowding thick and fast about me. I forgot the chatter and laughter of the diners, forgot the blaze of lights, the artificial palms, the tinkle of ice in the water glasses. The glare and roar of Broadway, the clangor of the surface cars vanished, and the muffled roar of the subway dynamite announced that another chunk of Manhattan was being blasted out. I was back once more in the city of Mexico after an absence of three years.

I remembered this same Obregon seated one night in a neighboring box in the Teatro Colon watching the exquisitely rhythmic dancing of the then famous, perhaps still famous, Spanish ballerina La Conesa. I remember distinctly intercepting the look of disdain with which she answered some admiring gesture of his. That look of hers expressed more than all the words in the world the hatred, the more earnest because suppressed, which the people of Mexico felt at the time toward the Sonora General. And even though he must have known of this bitter feeling toward him Obregon, with his coolly insolent insolence, his deep seated contempt for the "civilian" of a perfunctory metropolitan, sat alone in a box of the Colon Theatre, the cynosure of all eyes, an admirable mark for the bullet of an assassin.

Obregon's Ambitions.

About the time that Villa broke with Carranza, in the autumn of 1914, Obregon made his famous march disincarnally across the republic of Mexico from Sonora to the city of the Valley of Mexico.

The "simplistic" Zapatistas, as the people of the metropolis named them as soon as they found from practical intercourse that the men who followed were not as bad as they were painted, promptly evacuated the capital as soon as Obregon with his 40,000 Yaqui Indians knocked at its gate. He was only in possession a few days before we learned that he was a "doggone dangerous man."

There can be little doubt that at the time he had ambitions to oust his chief, Carranza. There was plenty of circumstantial evidence to support the popular belief to this effect. For one thing he was shipping all the jewelry

and priceless furniture which he commandeered, en el nombre de la sagrada causa (in the name of the sacred cause), from the mansions of the rich exiles to the city of Orizaba. If he were with Carranza then why did he not ship the loot to Vera Cruz, where the venerable First Chief sat waiting? Orizaba is just half way to the city of Vera Cruz.

Obregon was at the time also seizing all the automobiles he could find, his men were taking the horses, the miserable, ill treated coach horses, out of the public coaches which he encountered on the streets. He also emptied some churches and the well equipped convent of Santa Brigida. All this valuable loot was glutting the warehouses and the railroad station of Orizaba, not, as it should have been, those of Vera Cruz. Even the presidential chair, the throne of many a Mexican dictator, was sent to repose within sight of the eternal snows of Orizaba.

Then one morning the city awakened to find a new decree. By that time we were becoming case hardened; the only law in force was the law of the decree. Forerunners knew, and other, Article 33 of the Constitution, which provides for the expulsion of undesirable foreigners. They used to say in Mexico—"Juan Pelado" is good at giving catch phrases—that there were only two articles of the Constitution left by the revolution: "the foreigner and 30-30 (after the rifle of that ilk) for the Mexican."

Clergy Held for Ransom.

The new decree ordered the clergy of the city to pay at once a special war tax of 2,000,000 pesos. This money was to be raised among themselves. Charitable individuals were not allowed to contribute; they would be handed later.

The clergy of Mexico, I understand, are not at all rich, statements to the contrary notwithstanding. With all the will in the world they could not raise so much among themselves. They told Gen. Obregon that it couldn't be done.

By this time we knew that Alvaro was not the sort of revolutionary chieftain who took no for an answer, certainly not from a mere civilian, and a hated padre at that, so we watched the columns of the official press breathlessly for the next step.

It was not long in coming. An order was issued that all the clergy of the city, without distinction as to race or rank or faith, were to appear before the chief at the National Palace at 11 A. M. on a certain day "to discuss the best way to alleviate existing conditions among the poor of the city." Any priest who failed to attend would be dealt with summarily.

Nearly two hundred priests attended punctually; they dared not refuse. Obregon locked the great doors and told them they were prisoners until they paid the two millions. No waste of words.

The hatred against Obregon and his Yaqui Indians rose beyond fever heat, people blasphemed when they whispered his name. The expected popular uprising did not, however, materialize, as priests were posted at strategic points throughout the city and great gray, armored motor cars patrolled the principal thoroughfares, machine guns and rifles grinning through the loopholes. The priests refused to pay the



THE HOTEL ST. FRANCIS, GENERAL OBREGON'S HEADQUARTERS DURING HIS OCCUPATION OF MEXICO CITY. (THE AMERICAN FLAG DID NOT THEN FLY FROM THE STANDARD ABOVE.)

money and the churches were closed. Gen. Obregon demonstrated conclusively that he was a strong man. Then after a week or so came the turn of the mere civilians. The blank walls, churches and street corners were plastered throughout the city with a new decree. A special war tax was to be levied on all real property based on the ratable valuation. Any one refusing to pay would be summarily dealt with.

There were to be no exceptions; foreigner and native Mexican alike had to contribute to "the sacred cause." If paid it would have netted Obregon some \$50,000,000 in Mexican currency; it was the most ambitious forced loan any revolutionary leader had had the audacity to demand. It left the city breathless.

When the merchants and business men had got their breath back they held hurried secret conferences. The diplomatic representatives of the various nations were present at some of these meetings. The upshot was that every one was to stand pat and refuse to pay.

One diplomat reported to his Government at the time that "it was popular belief that Gen. Obregon required the money as a reward for his services in the revolution." Consequently law abiding foreigners if they paid this "loan" would in reality be taking sides with one political faction as against another. Foreigners had no right to take such action.

It was the first instance in the history of revolutionary Mexico of civilians refusing point blank to obey a "decree." The very temerity of their action terrified the unfortunate merchants. The leading citizens fort with went into hiding.

When I look back on those days it seems to me that half the gente decente (better classes) were in hiding all the time, and the greater part of them some of the time. Any prominent man who smiled, however casually, on any one leader was a marked

man when that leader's enemies took the city later on. He either fled with the evacuating army or went into hiding.

In the great fortresslike old Spanish house in which I lived we used to have as many as ten prominent people—a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

Failure of Sonora General Mainly Due to Contempt of Southern Peoples and His Unquenchable Demand for Loot—Need for Law and Order Greater Than Ever

tax, were ordered to appear on a certain morning at the Hidalgo Theatre "to discuss with me the best means of relieving the necessities of the poor." The order was signed "Alvaro Obregon." I should mention that Obregon insisted all along that he only needed the money "to relieve the misery of the poor."

Heaven knows there was need of relief at the time, as the food situation was desperate. But it is an interesting commentary that of the lesser forced loans which he had collected at various times since his occupation of the city, not one centavo had gone to relieve the poor. Furthermore it is not without interest to know that when the grocerymen, in obedience to

lists now rose higher than ever. But there was no popular uprising; the armored cars patrolling the main thoroughfares were an effective preventive.

The merchants were marched in small squads to the various military barracks and locked up. Their friends were frantic. Representations of all kinds were made to Obregon. The Diplomatic Corps protested. The prisoners were set free.

It was the last act of a theatrical reign, and before many days had passed the Obregonistas were evacuating the capital before the approaching menace of isolation between the forces of the Zapatistas, who nearly surrounded the city, and the then all

effort to do so, because he is the type of ruler the unlettered Mexican Indian appreciates and understands—and obeys unquestioningly. He might have been a second Porfirio Diaz, only he lacked the deep knowledge of his people which helped the famous dictator to keep his country peaceful for the longest consecutive period in her history—thirty years.

Perhaps his failure might be explained, psychologically speaking, by the fabled superiority of the northern warrior antediluvian by a too unspoken contempt of the peaceful, suffering, indolent Indian of the mountain ringed valleys of the south.

The final page of the revolution is yet to be written. Who knows but Obregon may yet be afforded an opportunity of proving himself the second Diaz? One wonders if the hands of Carranza will occupy a position of prominence in the final chapter.

I was speaking to a British Consul recently who has just come out of one of the southern States of Mexico. He says that conditions in southern Mexico are appalling.

There is no law and little order. Bandits ply their lucrative calling throughout the States of Chiapas, Yucatan, Oaxaca, the Isthmus. He was unable to speak with certainty of conditions around Mexico City and in the north. Hardly a week passes that some train is not blown up or derailed, with the accompanying massacre or robbery of the passengers.

There is no more respect for the person and property of the foreigner than of the Mexican. The Carranza Government seems unable to do anything toward putting a stop to the anarchy, and conditions grow steadily worse as the weeks pass.

The large cities are held by Government troops, but bands of rebels are varying sizes audaciously operating in the intervening country, almost upon the suburbs of the centres of population. He spoke pessimistically of the outlook.

"The main ally of the Carranza Government is the world war," he said.



GEN. CARRANZA AND HIS STAFF IN THE FIELD. THE FIRST CHIEF IS AT THE EXTREME RIGHT OF THE PICTURE.

OVER THE TOP WITH HOOVER HAS ITS WOES

By ROY K. MOULTON.

DECEMBER 3: When my wife and I decided to go over the top with Herbert Hoover we signed for the duration of the war.

From the small square sign in the front parlor window to the pledge card hanging over the kitchen sink our household is organized to help drive the horrendous Hun back to his native land and make him sorry he ever left it. And we are determined to fight to the last cartridge.

So long as we eat most of our meals outside the house we get along. We are not satisfied merely to follow. We also seek to lead, or Agnes does, at least. She has joined everything that is worth joining or everything that can get to the same back the same day in the subway. Now she is feverishly engaged in organizing a new association, of which she will be president. She told me about it this morning.

"It is a perfectly corking idea," she said. "The name of the organization is the Society for the Education of Butchers."

"It strikes me that the butchers are pretty wise as it is," I said.

"They are able in arithmetic," she replied. "They can multiply and add, as perhaps no other class of tradesmen, but they are slightly below normal in other branches of useful knowledge."

"I have never been able to put anything over on a butcher yet," said I. "I even tried to sell one of them a Canadian dime in the dark one night just as he was closing his shop, but I might just as well have tried to hand him a hot river."

"In mathematics the butchers are immense," replied Agnes, "and our nation's safety will not attempt to educate them along that line, but they can't read. I have struck five butchers in the last fortnight who can't read a word."

"I am amazed," I declared.

"Blindness of Butchers."

"You wouldn't be if you did the shopping," she said. "Two days ago I noticed an item in the paper to the effect that the Food Commission had set up on poultry. The paper said the wholesalers and retailers had agreed to it. I went to buy a chicken from our butcher and he charged me seven cents a pound more than the statement price."

"Look here, my man," I said. "An agreement has been reached. It was announced in the morning paper. Didn't you see it?"

Education of Butchers and Sugar Hunt Two Small Incidents

seem to know when prices go up. I wonder how they learn that?"

"Instinct," I replied. "They are wonderful that way. But that's nothing. I discovered a vegetable man the other day who had never heard of Hoover."

"Instead of sending missionaries abroad I think it is high time we began to educate our people at home," said Agnes. "Our new society will do it, too. We are going to establish night schools and first of all teach those poor men how to read. After that all will be easy. Our members will teach them, so this is one war movement that will not cost much money."

"When I left this morning Agnes was busy on the telephone organizing the new movement, and when I returned this evening the Society for the Education of Butchers had been duly formed and the members were just leaving my apartment for home full of the new idea."

"We shall subscribe for daily papers to be sent to each of the butchers in our districts," said Agnes, "and that's all the expense there will be. The teaching will take but a short time. We will start with A B C blocks. Isn't it magnificent?"

"The best thing in such a crisis is an evasive answer," I said.

"I'll show you luck," I said.

"And we sat down to our two dollar and a half steak."

"I can't see for the life of me why any butcher need learn how to read."

"We shall spread the gospel of Hoover among the butchers," said my wife.

No sugar in the house.

December 4: This was the evening we were to have the Crebbenses at dinner, and when I returned according to my wife's bookkeeping, and had been owing it to them for three years or better.

"I managed to reach home. Our guests were there. I was in a daze all through dinner. But I had a vague sense of having won in my search for sugar and having slipped the seven precious lumps of sweetness to my wife when I had come in."

It was worth a long illness to prove to her that I was the sugar hero of our parts.

A thrill of conscious pride swept through my soul when Agnes poured out the coffee and asked: "How many lumps? Mrs. Crebbenses?"

"None at all," replied our guest. "My husband and I always take our coffee straight." I struck the floor and knew no more.

Seven Times a Hero.

"Better make it seven," I said. I was in a generous mood.

I started out after kissing my wife good-by and began to look for sugar in a sugarless waste. I felt like a Forty-niner starting for California to get out a pot, a slab of bacon and an algon through a country infested by Indians.

Agnes gazed at me out of the window and waved her handkerchief. As I considered the task before me I felt more than once like turning back, but if I turned back I would never hear the last of it. Agnes had not asked me where I was going to get the sugar and I was glad of that.

I knew of a one arm cafe about three blocks from our house. In that cafe, as I remembered it, there was a marble topped serving table in the middle of the room and on the top of the table there was a square cabinet just brimming with loaf sugar.

I would order a cup of coffee, walk over to the square cabinet and pretend to make only one lump, while I really took eight, the one I needed for the coffee and the seven to take home in my pocket.

I walked bravely into the place and ordered the cup of coffee, took it in my hand and started for the sugar cabinet. Then I discovered that it had been removed. It was a fine night for discoveries.

"Don't you want some sugar in that coffee?" asked the waiter.

"Sure," I said. "That's what I came for."

"How many lumps?" he asked.

"Eight," I said, "and leave seven of them in the sauce by the side of the cup. I will use them as I need them."

"You get two," he said. "That's the limit."

"All right," I said. "Put one in the coffee and one in the sauce."

"Do you get me, sitting there and drinking seven cups of coffee to get those seven extra lumps of sugar?"

When I reached the fifth cup, I remembered that my wife had said five lumps would be enough. But no, I was the wise guy. I had told her that seven would be better.

With the seventh cup I had the finest little caffeine jolt that ever wandered about on its own reconnaissance among the ant hills and advertising signs of Long Island.

I managed to reach home. Our guests were there. I was in a daze all through dinner. But I had a vague sense of having won in my search for sugar and having slipped the seven precious lumps of sweetness to my wife when I had come in."

It was worth a long illness to prove to her that I was the sugar hero of our parts.

A thrill of conscious pride swept through my soul when Agnes poured out the coffee and asked: "How many lumps? Mrs. Crebbenses?"

"None at all," replied our guest. "My husband and I always take our coffee straight." I struck the floor and knew no more.

Seven Times a Hero.

"Better make it seven," I said. I was in a generous mood.

I started out after kissing my wife good-by and began to look for sugar in a sugarless waste. I felt like a Forty-niner starting for California to get out a pot, a slab of bacon and an algon through a country infested by Indians.

Agnes gazed at me out of the window and waved her handkerchief. As I considered the task before me I felt more than once like turning back, but if I turned back I would never hear the last of it. Agnes had not asked me where I was going to get the sugar and I was glad of that.

I knew of a one arm cafe about three blocks from our house. In that cafe, as I remembered it, there was a marble topped serving table in the middle of the room and on the top of the table there was a square cabinet just brimming with loaf sugar.

I would order a cup of coffee, walk over to the square cabinet and pretend to make only one lump, while I really took eight, the one I needed for the coffee and the seven to take home in my pocket.

"I managed to reach home. Our guests were there. I was in a daze all through dinner. But I had a vague sense of having won in my search for sugar and having slipped the seven precious lumps of sweetness to my wife when I had come in."

It was worth a long illness to prove to her that I was the sugar hero of our parts.

A thrill of conscious pride swept through my soul when Agnes poured out the coffee and asked: "How many lumps? Mrs. Crebbenses?"

"None at all," replied our guest. "My husband and I always take our coffee straight." I struck the floor and knew no more.

Seven Times a Hero.

"Better make it seven," I said. I was in a generous mood.

I started out after kissing my wife good-by and began to look for sugar in a sugarless waste. I felt like a Forty-niner starting for California to get out a pot, a slab of bacon and an algon through a country infested by Indians.

Agnes gazed at me out of the window and waved her handkerchief. As I considered the task before me I felt more than once like turning back, but if I turned back I would never hear the last of it. Agnes had not asked me where I was going to get the sugar and I was glad of that.

I knew of a one arm cafe about three blocks from our house. In that cafe, as I remembered it, there was a marble topped serving table in the middle of the room and on the top of the table there was a square cabinet just brimming with loaf sugar.

I would order a cup of coffee, walk over to the square cabinet and pretend to make only one lump, while I really took eight, the one I needed for the coffee and the seven to take home in my pocket.

I walked bravely into the place and ordered the cup of coffee, took it in my hand and started for the sugar cabinet. Then I discovered that it had been removed. It was a fine night for discoveries.

"Don't you want some sugar in that coffee?" asked the waiter.

"Sure," I said. "That's what I came for."

"How many lumps?" he asked.

"Eight," I said, "and leave seven of them in the sauce by the side of the cup. I will use them as I need them."

"You get two," he said. "That's the limit."

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.

One of the most charming, cultured old gentlemen I have ever met has gone into exile eternally because he aroused the enmity or suspicion of a leader of a faction of the so-called revolution. He was a time hidden behind drawn blinds. I have spent some of the pleasantest nights of my life with those exiles with music and games of all kinds. It was a constant miracle to me how they could stay so cheerful amid the desolation that afflicted their unhappy country. They never knew from hour to hour when their hiding place might be discovered and they might be hur-

ried before the blank wall and the firing squad.